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*U.S. Army Spends \$7 million on NASCAR and \$5 million sponsoring drag racing in 2011; Air Force and National Guard Spend Millions More*

**Washington, DC** - As Congress debates the Continuing Resolution (H.R. 1) to fund the federal government through September 30, 2011, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) introduced an amendment that cuts wasteful spending by ending taxpayer sponsorship of NASCAR race cars in the Department of Defense budget. Over the past decade, the Department of Defense has used hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars to fund NASCAR and other motorsports sponsorships, claiming it helps recruiting efforts.

"Taxpayer-funded NASCAR race cars are an absurdity at a time when the Republican-Tea Party is cutting federal support for homeless veterans, law enforcement officers, and firefighters. I know NASCAR fans are passionate and patriotic. This amendment gets the government out of NASCAR and gives them the opportunity to encourage the private sector to demonstrate its patriotism by donating a military sponsorship," Congresswoman McCollum said. "My Republican-Tea Party colleagues can support my amendment and stop wasting tax payer dollars or they can vote to keep wasting the American peoples' money."

In 2008, the U.S. Navy ended its sponsorship of NASCAR. The Coast Guard and Marine Corps dropped NASCAR in 2006. At the time a Marine Corps spokesperson was quoted in Stars and Stripes as saying, "We don't have a tracking mechanism to track how many people contracted because of seeing that advertisement on the hood of a car."

In 2011, the U.S. Army is sponsoring Ryan Newman's No. 39 Chevrolet Impala in the Spirit Cup Series at a cost to taxpayers of \$7 million. The \$7 million buys driver appearances and "U.S. Army" decals on the car.

This year, the Army is spending an additional \$5 million in taxpayer dollars for sponsorship of Tony Schumacher's Top Fuel Dragster in the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Full Throttle Drag Racing Series. The Army is the "official military partner of NHRA."

NASCAR's record of receiving special interest, taxpayer-funded benefits is not limited to sponsorships. On December 15, 2010 the Washington Post reported, "Owners of NASCAR tracks and other motorsports facilities would benefit from two more years of a tax policy making it cheaper for them to fund capital projects. Estimated cost to taxpayers: \$40 million." This special NASCAR tax break was included in the law that extended the Bush-era tax cuts and added nearly \$900 billion to the federal budget deficit.

The McCollum amendment to cut NASCAR funding is endorsed by the Council for Citizens Against Government Waste (CCAGW). In a letter from Thomas Schatz, president of CCAGW, the McCollum NASCAR amendment would "eliminate profligate government-funded programs that Americans do not need and taxpayers simply cannot afford."

*Congresswoman Betty McCollum serves on the House Appropriations and Budget Committees.*

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